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SUBJECT: SYG BAN MAKES FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO BASHIR ON
FORCE COMPOSITION

REF: DAKAR 323

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

11. (C) SUMMARY: During the March 17 monthly luncheon of Security Council PermReps, SYG Ban Ki-Moon reported on his meeting with Sudanese President Hassan al-Bashir on the margins of the Organization of the Islamic Conference meeting hosted in Dakar. According to Ban, Bashir continues to push back on the inclusion of Thai and Nepalese units. To attain Bashir's acceptance of the non-African units, Ban said he agreed to accept an additional battalion each from Ethiopia and Egypt. On Somalia, Ban said Somali Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein's outreach to opposition forces was creating a "moment of opportunity" that the international community should support. END SUMMARY.

Sudan/Darfur

12. (C) SYG Ban told the Security Council PermReps that President Bashir continues to push back on UNAMID force composition, but had agreed to accept the Thai and Nepalese units in exchange for including an additional battalion from Egypt and Ethiopia respectively. According to Ban, Bashir opened his meeting with the SYG by reiterating his opposition to the inclusion of the Thai and Nepalese units. Ban said Bashir refused to budge on the issue until Ban offered to deploy additional battalions from Ethiopia and Egypt respectively. Ban said this change in the deployment timeline will give UNAMID a total force strength of approximately 3900 by mid-May. (NOTE: USUN understands from separate conversations with DPKO that this concession was opposed by DPKO. DPKO A/SYG Mulet, who was present in Dakar, reportedly argued against making any further concessions to Bashir. DPKO believes the inclusion of so many Egyptian forces, who are close to the Khartoum regime, will heighten the risk of rebel attacks on UNAMID. END NOTE.) Ban reported that Bashir said he is eager for a "strategic dialogue with the West" and specifics on incentives the Government of the Sudan (GOS) can expect in exchange for facilitating the deployment of the UN-AU peacekeeping force. AMB Khalilzad responded that the GOS is "trying to sell the same thing over and over again" and the UN, not the GOS, should make the final decision on force composition.

13. (C) Libyan PermRep Ettalhi reported that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had approached his government and offered to begin unconditional talks with the Government of the Sudan, if the UN appointed former-SYG Kofi Annan as the

lead negotiator. Ettalhi reported that the JEM leadership is unhappy with the efforts of the UN and AU Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Ahmed Salim Salim. Ban responded that he had no plans to replace the negotiation team, but is moving forward with appointing a chief negotiator to be based in Khartoum. Ban said his priority for the moment is deploying a peacekeeping force capable of providing security improvements as quickly as possible, so that peace talks can move forward.

Chad/Sudan Accord

14. (C) Ban voiced support for the Dakar Accord, signed between Chad and Sudan, on March 13 on the margins of the OIC meeting. Ban reported tense discussions between Bashir and Chadian President Deby (reftel). According to Ban, Bashir refused to show up to the first scheduled negotiation session and remained combative throughout the negotiations. Ban expressed optimism that the signing of the accord would help to defuse lingering regional tensions.

Somalia

15. (C) On Somalia, Ban reported that the UN is in the midst of a serious policy review regarding what the United Nations can do to support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and improve security and humanitarian conditions in Somalia. Ban admitted that the current situation in Somalia was bleak, but pointed to recent developments as signs of political progress. Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein had met with some success in his efforts to reach out to Somali opposition

USUN NEW Y 00000244 002 OF 002

groups by inviting them to participate in talks with the government. Ban said that some of the opposition groups had agreed to drop their preconditions that the Ethiopian forces first withdraw from Somalia before talks can begin. Ban said these developments were creating a "moment of opportunity" that the international community should support.

KHALILZAD